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Atty. D cket: END904-0511040

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicants: Douglas B. Hoffman : Paper No:  
Serial No. 10/615,962 : Group Art Unit:  
Filed: July 9, 2003 : Examiner:  
For: SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING AN ARTICULATION  
JOINT FOR A FIRING BAR TRACK

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, Applicants herewith submit certain patent references which the Patent and Trademark Office may wish to consider in examining the above-identified application. The references are provided below, and are also listed on the attached Form PTO-1449.

<b>U.S. Patent</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Inventor</b>
US 5,797,537	08-25-1998	Oberlin et al.

Pursuant to the waiver published in the Pre-OG Notice, dated July 11, 2003, no copies are provided herewith of U.S. patents cited. No representation is made or intended that a prior art search has been made or that no better art than the listed is available. It is respectfully requested that the information be considered by the Examiner and made of record in the present application.

Serial No. 10/615,962

<u>CERTIFICATE OF MAILING</u>	
I hereby certify that a copy of this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on	
<u>10-9</u>	<u>2003</u>
<u>Sarah Ohlweiler</u>	
Sarah Ohlweiler	

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas B. Hoffman



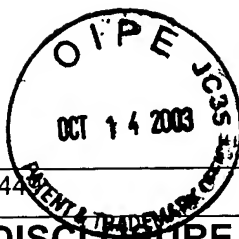
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9 Oct, 2003

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Substitute for Form PTO 144

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE  
STATEMENT BY APPLICANT**

(use as many sheets as necessary)

**Complete if Known**

Application No.	10/615,962
Filing Date	July 9, 2003
First Named Inventor	HOFFMAN, Douglas B.
Art Unit	
Examiner Name	

Sheet	1	of	1	Attorney Docket No.	END904-0511040
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**U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

Examiner initials	Cite No.	DOCUMENT NUMBER		Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		Number-Kind code <sup>2</sup> (if known)				
		US-	5,797,537	08-25-1998	Oberlin et al.	
		US-				
		US-				
		US-				
		US-				
		US-				

**FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS**

Examiner initials	Cite No.	Foreign Patent Document	Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T <sup>6</sup>
		Country Code <sup>3</sup> -Number <sup>4</sup> -Kind code <sup>5</sup> (if known)				

**OTHER PRIOR ART – NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS**

Examiner initials	Cite No.	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), date, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published	T <sup>6</sup>

EXAMINER SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE CONSIDERED \_\_\_\_\_

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609; Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

<sup>1</sup> Applicant's unique citation designation number (optional). <sup>2</sup> See Kinds Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) or MPEP 901.04. <sup>3</sup> Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST. 3). <sup>4</sup> For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. <sup>5</sup> Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST. 16 if possible. <sup>6</sup> Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.